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EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Buenos Aires, Argentina

AQ 027

[REDACTED] (Entire Text)
MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Date: February 11, 1981
Place: Ambassador's Residence

SUBJECT : Situation of Argentine Jewish Community

PARTICIPANTS : Mr. Mario Gorenstein, President, DAIA
(Delegation of American Jewish Associations)

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: ☐ In Part ☒ In Full

☐ Classify as ☐ Extend as ☐ Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

Mr. Manfredo Baumatz, DAIA

Mr. Edgardo Gorenberg, Secretary, DAIA

Mr. Marcelo Stein, B'nai B'rith

Mr. Alex Rubin, B'nai B'rith

Senator and Mrs. Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.)

Senator and Mrs. Harrison Williams (D-N.J.)

Mr. Barry Sklar, Staff Member, Senate

Foreign Relations Committee

Townsend E. Friedman, Political Officer

COPIES TO : AMB/DCM, POL-2, ECON, SCIENTIFIC, DAO,
APA/SC/A, ARA/RPP, ARA/PFC, INR/OIL/B,
INR/RAA/A, HA

The Argentines made the following points, largely in response to questions put to them by the Senators:

A. There is no official GOA policy or anti-semitism. However, within the military-political coalition that supports the government there are anti-semitic elements. President Videla and his supporters do not have the strength to confront these groups, thus they must tolerate their activities as well as the publication in Argentina of anti-semitic magazines and pamphlets. The refusal of

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the GOA to allow the televising of the Holocaust is illustrative. The Foreign Ministry has twice recommended that the program be put on. The GOA has not done so because of the opposition within its ranks, though it argues that it fears televising the program would produce violent anti-semitic acts.

B) The number of Jews who disappeared probably was not terribly out of proportion to Jewish representation in the social class that produced the terrorists and subversives -- middle and upper middle class, university-educated, urban intellectuals.

C) Those outside the country who state that Argentine Jews and Soviet Jews are in similar situations relative to their respective governments do a grave disservice to the Argentine Jewish community. Jews in Argentina participate in the country's economic and cultural life. The internal life of the Argentine Jewish community -- cultural, religious and community -- goes on without interference. Jews in Argentina can leave the country when they want to. Like other minority groups, Jews suffer some kinds of discrimination -- for example, the Education Minister who, like all Argentine Education Ministers is close to the Church, has sponsored a national education program that includes content offensive to the Jews as well as other non-Catholics. There are no Jewish military officers and only 3-4 Argentine Jewish diplomats.

D) In his meeting with Argentine Jewish leaders, President-select Viola made appropriate and apparently sincere remarks about opposing all manifestations of anti-semitism and rejecting any kind of anti-semitic attitudes. He sounded very much like President Videla. The Jewish community hopes that he will be able to follow through on what seems to be his good intentions though it is clear that to do so he will face the same sort of obstacles that President Videla encountered.

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